

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

October 7, 2010  
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E -120

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Robinson, Eileen Rasnack, Berta Seltzer, Diana Thompson, Howard Katz, Richard Englund, Beverly Hayden, Cindy Sharek, Jullie Gray, Bill Merriman, Peg English, Heidi Ressler

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Megargel, Hannah Kimball

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy VonWald, Alex O'Reilly, Department of Parks and Community Services

OTHERS PRESENT: Kris Fredrickson, MSW, LICSW, Seattle VA-PSHCS  
Joel Estey, Regional Veterans Services Manager

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. by Chair Robinson who presided. All committee members were present with the exception of Bob Megargel and Hannah Kimball.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September, 2010

Ms. Thompson called attention to the last sentence of the third paragraph on page 2 and clarified that the automatic rebate will occur only in 2010, not every year. She also called attention to the last paragraph on page 3 and pointed out that "2014" should read "2011."

**Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Ms. Seltzer. Second was by Ms. Rasnack and the motion carried unanimously.**

VETERANS BENEFITS: DISABILITY SERVICES OVERVIEW

Ms. Kris Fredrickson said she serves as a geriatric social worker for the Seattle Veterans Administration. She explained that there are many VA benefits. The Community Care programs are aimed at keeping persons functioning at the highest levels possible, and to keep persons in their homes for as long as possible. The program is conducted in partnership with Aging and Disability Services. Through the program, veterans and their families are given money with which to purchase services they need in the community, including in-home personal care, delivered meals, and adult day health attendants.

The Homemaker Home Health Aide is a service that provides help in the home via a personal aide. The focus is on daily personal care and on keeping persons out of the hospital and costlier services, such as nursing home placement. The services are offered primarily to those who are on hospice care and to those who have just been released from a nursing home or hospital.

Respite services are aimed at providing a break for caregivers. The VA recognizes that keeping caregivers healthy helps to keep veterans healthy and prevents the use of costlier services. The program allows up to 31 respite calendar days per year. Typically, the veteran is brought to the community living center at the hospital to be cared for while the caregiver takes a break. One of the agencies the VA contracts with is Adult Day Health.

The Contract Nursing Home program provides skilled and intermediate care to veterans in community nursing homes. The VA does not own any nursing homes but does contract with nursing homes in various geographic regions around the state to provide 24-hour nursing care to veterans. The veteran must have a 60 percent or greater service connection, meaning they had an illness or injury while in the service and is 60 percent disabled.

Ms. Fredrickson said the VA contracts with various adult day health centers to provide attendance two days per week for any veteran who meets the eligibility criteria. The services provide respite for caregivers but also provides for socialization, skill development, and memory improvement for the veteran.

The Care Coordination Home Telehealth program is a very innovative service. It provides medical machines in the home as needed by veterans, including video tele-monitors and video phones, aimed at monitoring vital signs, weight, temperature and blood sugar levels in real time. The monitoring nurse is then able to advise the veteran about adjusting diet or medications, or tell them to come in to be checked immediately. The program cuts down on unnecessary doctor visits and hospitalization. The telehealth program is being used to monitor mental health, conduct counseling, and general social work visits.

Caregiver support and respite has come to be recognized as being very important. Fisher House is a home constructed on property owned by the VA in Seattle and it includes 21 guest suites for family members of hospitalized veterans.

Ms. Fredrickson said she is charged with operating the caregiver conference which for the past 22 years has been conducted at the American Lake and Seattle VA sites. The full-day conferences features speakers, including physicians, psychologists, attorneys, and various geriatric services specialists, to address various topics and provide information and resources.

The VA sponsors support groups of all kinds, including a weekly group for caregivers and groups focused on MS, ALS and stroke. November is National Family Caregiver Support Month. The new focus of the VA is to support caregivers as an organized and recognized function.

Qualified veterans and their caregivers are eligible for funds in addition to their VA benefits that can be used for additional aide care. The funds are specifically for veterans who require help with their activities of daily living.

The VA has a large housing department. It provides Section 8 vouchers in coordination with HUD. Priority is given to homeless veterans. The grants and per diem program provides funds to develop programs aimed at bringing online housing for veterans.

Ms. Fredrickson informed the Network that on May 5 President Obama signed the Caregivers and Veterans Ombudsman Healthcare Act into law. The Act will for the first time ever provide funding to be used for the support of caregivers. The funds will be used to purchase additional care to provide the primary caregivers some assistance and relief. The Act will also provide some services to female veterans. The VA does have a very focused women's program that includes trauma and recovery programs.

Ms. Fredrickson asked the Network members to stay aware of veteran's issues in the community, including the needs of returning soldiers, and aging soldiers, and to be interested and participate in veterans activities. The fact is the VA is the largest employer of social workers in the nation, and everyone should be aware of that.

Ms. Ressler asked how Washington State compares to other states when it comes to veterans issues. Ms. Fredrickson said the Seattle area has many resources for veterans. There are, however, more resources available in other states. Some of the more rural states are certainly having trouble providing veterans with services. The VA is actively involved in building community based outpatient clinics in an effort to reach the more rural areas.

Mr. Joel Estey, Regional Veterans Services Manager, said much of his time is spent promoting the veterans and human services levy in rural areas where veterans services, at least from the perspective of King County, have not existed before. He said he visits rural community and senior centers in the more rural areas. The fact is, the largest employer in King County is the Department of Defense.

There are 143,500 veterans in King County according to the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. The federal VA system is huge and is ever changing, which it needs to do in order to meet the needs of the WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War and the Gulf War veterans. The baby boomers are coming into the system in ever-increasing numbers. The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs has authority throughout the state, while the King County Veterans Program has authority only in King County. The three providers, however, do integrate and cooperate with each other to the extent possible.

The veterans and human services levy was approved by voters in 2005. The levy began in 2002 when the mayor of Auburn and the mayor of Enumclaw began discussions about the need in the county; the levy made it to the ballot with the help of King County Councilmember Bob Ferguson and others. Half of the revenues which began to be collected in 2006 went to veterans and half went to other at-risk needy populations that did not serve in the military.

Mr. Estey said the nature of war has changed significantly since WWII. Many of the wounds received by Vietnam War soldiers were the result of booby traps; for Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans, the signature injuries include depression, post-traumatic stress, and traumatic brain injuries resulting from improvised explosive devices. Thirty percent of all homeless persons on any given night are veterans. The revenues generated for the human services side of the levy have been used to provide healthcare, has helped families address the issue of homelessness, and has been used to provide mental health treatment.

Passage of the levy triggered the need for a detailed implementation plan. Many stakeholders and service providers participated in the development of the Service Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP includes four strategies: 1) enhancing services and access to services for veterans; 2) ending homelessness through prevention and permanent housing; 3) improving access to mental health services and strengthening families at risk; and 4) evaluation. The midpoint evaluation report has been published and is available online. The data collected from providers will eventually make its way to the King County Council and the County Executive who will make the decision as to whether the levy should be on the ballot again in November of 2011.

Mr. Estey noted that in 2009 over 28,000 individuals were served with levy funds. More than 200 housing units were brought online, and over 350 more will be added by the end of 2010. A number of families received post-traumatic stress counseling. The incarcerated program has

been ongoing since 1995; it involves sending social workers into the jails to identify veterans and getting them linked up with treatment programs and housing.

BREAK

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Advocacy

Ms. Rasnack reported that a great deal is going on relative to advocacy, especially given the proposed budget cuts in which all departments have been asked to look at a 6.3 percent cut across the board. Those reductions will dramatically affect human services in King County. The Eastside Human Services Forum has been working to develop its legislative agenda but it is looking much like the 2009 agenda. It is focused on maintaining and protecting rather than seeking budgetary increases.

Ms. VonWald reminded the Network that the Washington State Senior Lobby Conference is scheduled for October 13. She said anyone interested in attending must sign up and pay the \$40 registration fee.

Ms. Rasnack said the subcommittee has put together a summary of the Network's advocacy efforts. She noted that the report included the legislative forum conducted jointly with the Kirkland Senior Council in 2009 and the status of the various legislative issues the group has focused on. She suggested the Network should be proud of its accomplishments.

The subcommittee continues to move forward in planning the next legislative forum. A reminder will be sent out to elected officials and those seeking office during the week of October 18.

The Human Services Commission has forwarded to the City Council its list of funding recommendations for 2011 and 2012. Ms. Rasnack said the Network should urge the Council to support those recommendations.

Ms. O'Reilly added that in addition to the funding recommendations developed by the Human Services Commission, a request for an additional \$112,000 has been submitted which is aimed at funding agencies that provide direct assistance to persons affected by the recession.

Ms. Rasnack said the subcommittee also recommended urging the Council to support older adults in the city through the North Bellevue Community Center by approving the budget proposal for that facility.

Ms. Von Wald said the North Bellevue Community Center budget has been reduced by five percent. That will mean the center will not be open to the public on Saturdays except for rental events. A staff person will be on site on Saturdays, though the number of part-time employees at the desk may be reduced.

Ms. Rasnack suggested that a letter should be drafted and forwarded to the Council on behalf of the Network urging the Council to approve the recommendations of the Human Services Commission, and to support older adults in Bellevue through the North Bellevue Community Center and Aging Services based on the proposed funding level in the City Manager's recommended budget.

**Motion to draft the letter was made by Ms. Gray. Second was by Mr. Katz and the motion carried unanimously.**

#### B. Outreach

Ms. Ressler said at its most recent meeting the subcommittee focused on what it has accomplished during the year. The list included the submission of three newspaper articles to date, with a fourth being prepared; attendance at public events; some personal speaking appearances; hearing from Ms. Rasnack as a guest speaking on the topic of services offered to seniors, what seniors can volunteer to do, and how volunteers are screened; a talk from Mr. Megargel about Initiative 1029 having to do with the training of home healthcare workers; and feedback from emergency responders regarding the Vial of Life program.

Mr. Katz said he recently saw several emergency responders gathering for coffee. He said he asked them about the Vial of Life program and to a person they indicated their support for it.

#### C. Housing

Chair Robinson said she met with Arthur Sullivan with ARCH to talk about the housing database that is to be included as part of the ARCH website. She said some additional tweaks are being made to make it more user friendly. It should be posted very soon.

Chair Robinson said the subcommittee has concluded that the aging in place topic is daunting. No organization wants to stand up and be recognized as the expert on how to age in place. The city does not want to recommend specific services but does want to educate people with regard to the issues involved with aging in place. The topic is too big for the subcommittee to tackle on its own. There are some organizations interested in working with the group, however, including one from the University of Washington. Some grant money may be available to a non-profit group interested in doing the study, though the grant application must be submitted by November 1.

Ms. Gray asked if the Senior Advisory Board could serve as the main driver of the study, in conjunction with volunteers from the Network. Ms. VonWald said that could be researched.

**Motion to explore the possibility of applying for the grant funds was made by Ms. Ressler. Second was by Mr. Meriman.**

Ms. Thompson suggested the study could be a good tie-in for the Vial of Life program.

Ms. Seltzer said she is involved with another group that is seeking a grant to do a similar study. She said the issues are complicated and doing the study would be difficult.

Ms. Gray pointed out that if done, the project would be conducted in 2011 but would not be open for discussion during the January meeting where the Network will determine its course for the year. She suggested that the timeline for writing the grant application and getting it submitted on time is unrealistic.

**The motion failed with five voting for and seven voting against.**

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

### A. Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative

Ms. Seltzer noted that the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative is sponsoring the East King County Transportation Forum on November 3 at the North Bellevue Community Center. The first part of the program will involve a presentation by the Washington State Department of Transportation regarding tolling on the SR-520 Bridge. The transportation issues facing east King County will also be highlighted.

### B. Eastside Human Services Forum

## OTHER BOARDS/COMMISSIONS REPORTS

Chair Robinson informed the group that the proposed budget submitted to the Council by the City Manager has no negative impact on the Network.

## STAFF REPORT

Ms. VonWald said the City Manager's proposed budget is pretty encouraging given the way the economy is. The forecast for city revenues continues to change, and the impact of passage of the various initiatives is not fully known yet, so exactly how things will turn out in the end cannot be said just yet.

Ms. VonWald said a veterans and human service forum would be held later in the day from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the North Bellevue Community Center.

Ms. VonWald said eight applications have been received from persons interested in serving on the Network. The nominating committee will be interviewing seven of the eight and will have a recommendation ready for review at the next Network meeting.

The Chinese Information and Service Center will conduct its resource fair at the North Bellevue Community Center on October 14 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Network will have a table at the event.

The Home is Where the Heart Is Fair being sponsored by Elder Move is slated for October 16 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Network will also have a table at that event.

Ms. VonWald made available to the Network members copies of the final recommendations from the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults study group that was appointed by the governor.

Ms. Ressler reported that an elder abuse conference was scheduled for October 28 and 29 at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training site in Burien. The cost to attend is \$75 for both days, and \$50 for one day.

Mr. Katz reported that he attended the Senior Services auction and dinner. He said he was amazed at the amount of money raised.

NEW BUSINESS – None

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS – None

## UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Robinson reported that both she and Ms. VonWald would not be able to attend the Network meeting if held on November 4. There was agreement to meet on October 28 instead.

## ADJOURN

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 10:37 a.m.